

preserve in a drawer. When I returned home  
I counted  
their withered stems: there were twenty, and  
over my lips  
there passed the gentle warmth of my loved  
one's twenty  
kisses."<sup>1</sup>

The man who has lived with a Laurence —  
the creature  
who robs youth of all its flame and degrades it  
to the mire  
—does not afterwards call her his good fairy.  
But whatever  
ever the *limson*, whatever its origin and its  
ending, it was  
certainly marked by most distressful  
circumstances. As  
the winter of 1861 approached, Zola's poverty  
became terrible.  
It was then, as he afterwards told Guy de  
Maupassant,<sup>2</sup> that he lived for days together on a  
little bread,  
which, in Provengal fashion, he dipped in  
oil; that he  
set himself to catch sparrows from his  
window, roasting  
them on a curtain rod; and that he "played  
the Arab/<sup>3</sup>  
remaining indoors for a week at a time, draped  
in a cover-  
let, because he had no garments to wear.  
'Not only did  
he himself starve, but the girl who shared  
his poverty  
starved with him; and Paul Alexis and  
Maupassant and  
"Claude's Confession" relate how, at one  
moment of des-  
peration, on a bitter winter evening, after an  
unbroken.  
fast of thirty-six hours, he took off his coat  
on the Place  
du Pantheon and bade his tearful companion

carry it to  
the pawnshop.

" It was freezing. I went home at the run,  
perspiring the  
while with fear and anguish. Two days later  
my trousers

<sup>1</sup> See E. A. YizeteU/s Introduction to "The Fat and the Thin" (**"Le**  
Yentre de Paris" ) London, 1896. The original appeared  
in "Le Figaro,\*  
Kovember 20, 1866 ; and Zola reprinted portions of it,  
altered out of regard  
for Ms wife, in "JSTouveaux Contes & Ninon," 1874.

<sup>2</sup> "Bevue Bleue," March 10, 1883; and "Celebrite\*  
eontemporaines,"  
Yol. I, Paris, 1883. „